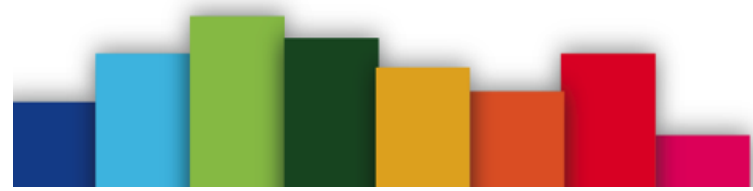


ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION



# Strategic Plan

2016 - 2019  
(Updated December 2017)



**Strategic Plan** Introduction

I'm pleased to present the Strategic Plan for RGU:Union for 2016 - 2019. In developing our plan for the future, we've worked hard to engage students and staff in creating a document that is clear, easy to understand and reflects the views of students.

We've changed our language to include 'Our Promise, Purpose and Priorities' which creates a more personal connections between the Union and it's students.

I've very proud that our strategy and our new themes of Your Voice, Your Opportunities, Your Wellbeing, Your Community and Your Future truly captures the work that the Union does and sets ambitious targets of how we want our organisation to develop.

We hope that our new plan will drive us "to make the student experience the focus of everything that we do" and allow RGU:Union to be a strong, sustainable, student-led organization.

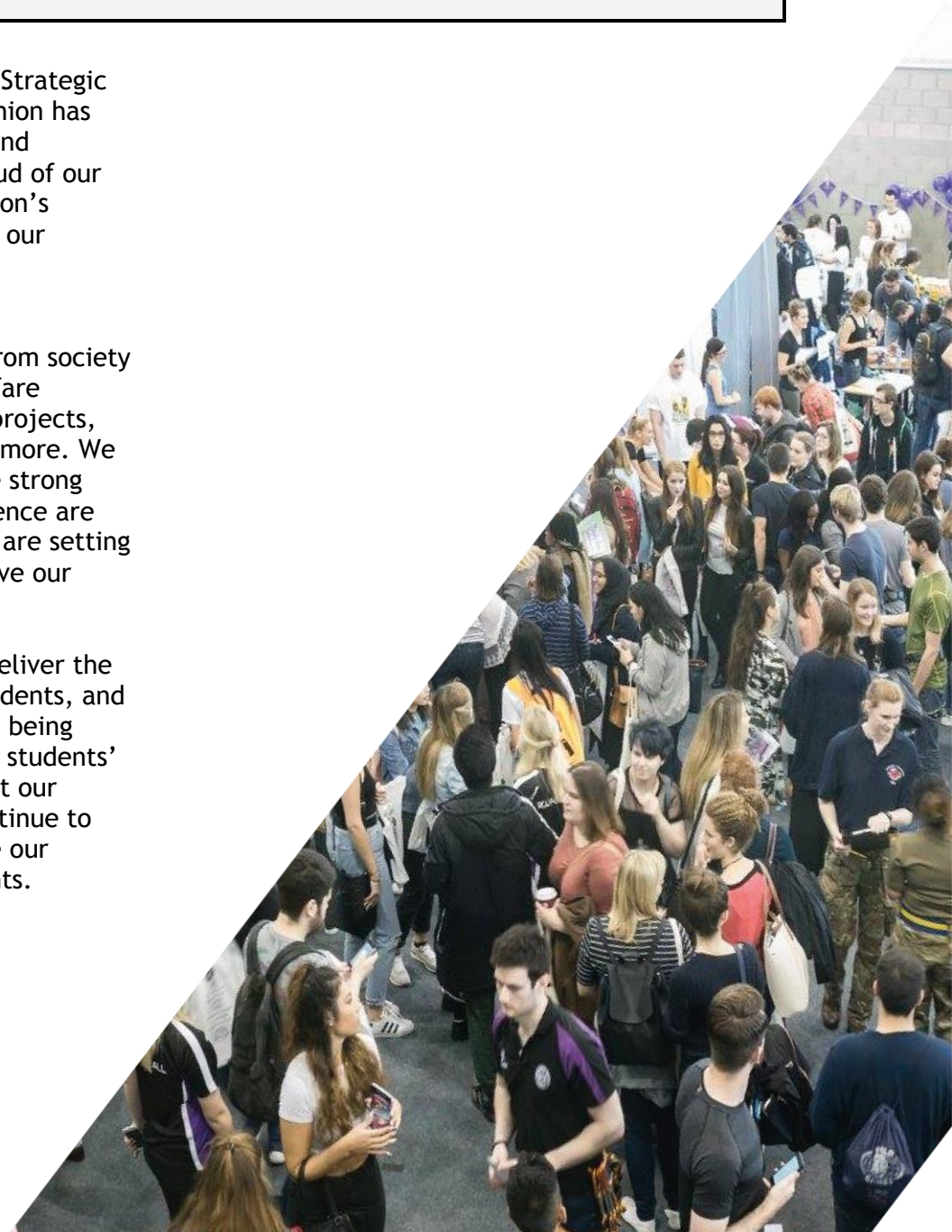
**Edward Pollock**  
*President (Communication and Democracy)*  
2015 - 2017

Welcome to the RGU:Union Strategic Plan for 2016 - 2019. The Union has been significantly growing and developing, and we are proud of our focus on embedding the Union's strategic promise into all of our services.

The Union has seen great improvements in all areas from society and sports numbers, to welfare campaigns, environmental projects, student representation and more. We have sought to ensure these strong areas of the student experience are core in our strategy and we are setting key targets to help us achieve our aims.

The Union team strives to deliver the best possible services to students, and our plan is to ensure we are being recognized as a high quality students' union. Our new plan sets out our promise on how we will continue to grow the charity, undertake our business and support students.

**Michele Collie**  
*General Manager*



## OUR PURPOSE

THE STUDENTS' UNION IS AN **INDEPENDENT STUDENT-LED ORGANISATION** WHICH EXISTS TO REPRESENT, ENGAGE, SUPPORT AND DEVELOP ALL MEMBERS. WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE ALL STUDENTS GET THE MOST FROM THEIR TIME AT RGU

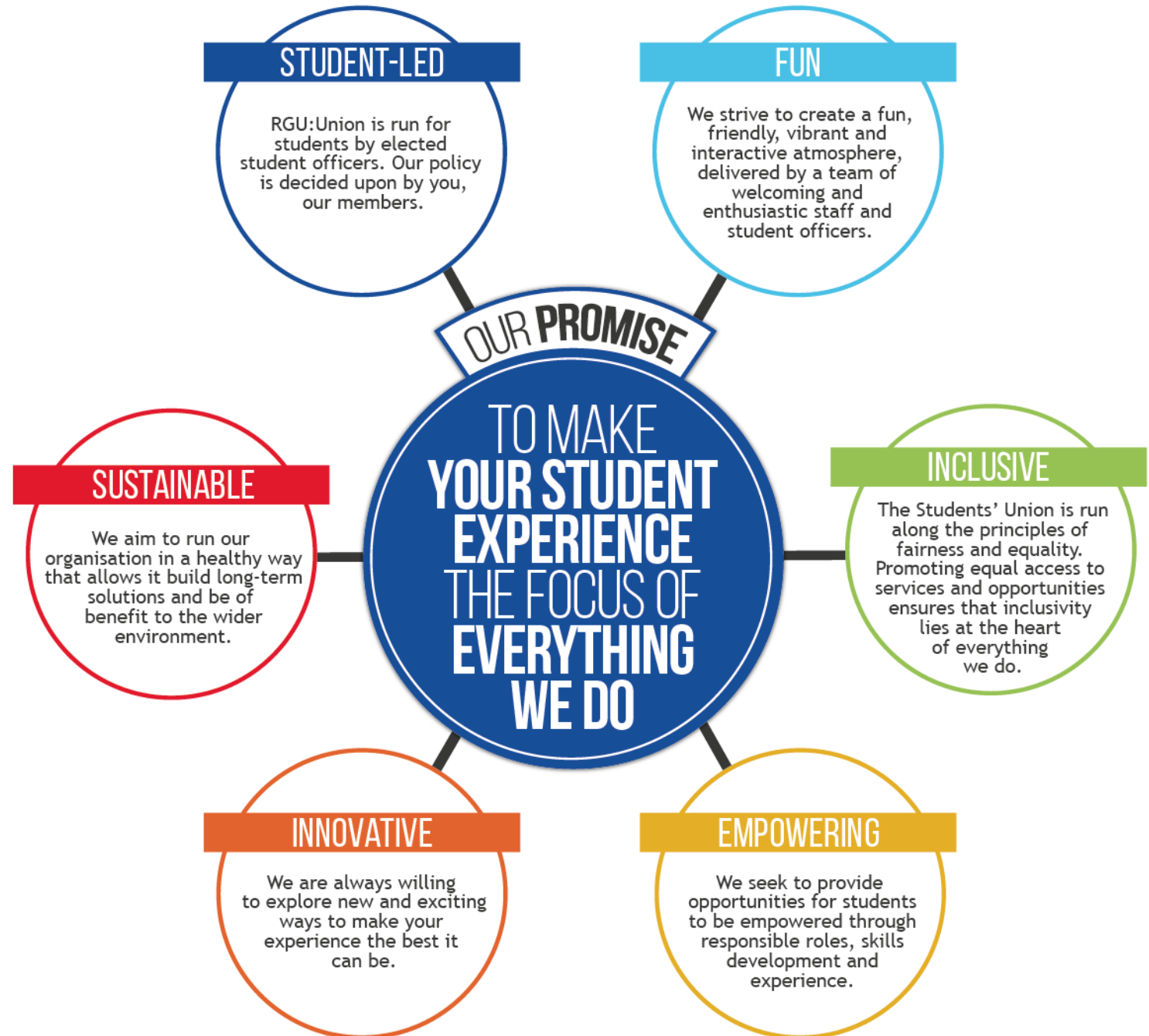
## OUR PRINCIPLES

STUDENT-LED  
INCLUSIVE  
FUN

INNOVATIVE  
EMPOWERING  
SUSTAINABLE

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

YOUR VOICE  
YOUR OPPORTUNITIES  
YOUR WELLBEING  
YOUR COMMUNITY  
YOUR FUTURE





Strategic Plan		Quality Indicators	
In order to demonstrate that RGU:Union is performing to a nationally-recognised standard, we aim to achieve several indicators of the quality of our performance.			
Quality Mark	Current Status	Future Status	Time Period
Quality Students' Unions	We achieved a bronze mark in the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) in 2013	SUEI has been replaced by the Quality Students' Unions mark, which we aim to achieve	2017-19
NUS Awards	This year, we were shortlisted for the following NUS Scotland Awards: Campaign of the Year, Officer Team of the Year, and University Students' Association of the Year. We won the Student Opportunities of the Year award for Go Green	We aim to continue to be nominated for awards, and to win and, therefore, be shortlisted for national NUS Awards	Annually
Green Impact	This year, we achieved 'Good' status on the Green Impact programme	We aim to achieve 'Very Good' status	2017/18
Investors in Volunteering (IiV)	Previously achieved in 2013	We aim to achieve again in 2017/18	2017/18
Investors in People (IiP)	Not previously achieved	We aim to achieve this in 2017/18	2017/18
Investors in Diversity (IiD)	Not previously achieved	The costs and benefits of achieving IiD were explored, and it was decided it did not offer value for money. An internal Equality & Diversity audit will be conducted instead	2017/18
Research	Status	Future Status	Time Period
'Union Futures' investigation into student mental health	We have agreed to join a nationwide survey into mental health issues amongst the student population, conducted by Alterline	The research will inform a strategy on how to best provide support and promote preventative life skills	2017/18
Score achieved in National Student Survey (NSS)	56% satisfaction was achieved in 2017 for the question "The students' union effectively represents students' academic interests"	Aspire to 60% satisfaction in 2018, and increase national ranking	Annually
Score achieved in Student Experience survey	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good social life: 6.0/7.0</li> <li>- Good community atmosphere: 6.0/7.0</li> <li>- Good extracurricular activities/societies: 6.2/7.0</li> <li>- Good environment on campus/around university: 6.5/7.0</li> <li>- Good students' union: 5.0/7.0</li> <li>- Good support/welfare: 6.0/7.0</li> <li>- Cheap shop/bar/amenities: 4.5/7.0</li> <li>- Good sports facilities: 6.5/7.0</li> </ul>	Annually
Score achieved in survey conducted by RGU:Union	89% of respondents are satisfied with the Union, and 46% are very satisfied	Aspire to achieve a "very satisfied" rating of 50%	2018/19
Finance	Status	Future Status	Time Period
Balanced budget	To be achieved annually	To be achieved annually	Annually
Compliance with legal requirements	To be achieved annually	To be achieved annually	Annually
Recognition and management of risks to the institution	Risks and mitigating actions are listed in Risk Register. High-level risks are considered at Trustee Board meetings	To continue to manage risks	Annually/4 times a year



<b>YOUR VOICE</b>	<i>“to provide a platform for the democratic representation and communication of views of the diverse population of students”</i>
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Objectives
<i>To ensure that representation systems across the Union and University are accessible, visible and provide pathways to get involved</i>
<i>To encourage greater diversity amongst students participating in democratic processes and other activities</i>
<i>To work in partnership with the University and external stakeholders to enhance representation of student views, and to support student campaigns at local and national levels</i>
<i>To provide multiple media platforms for the promotion of projects, student views and achievements</i>

Key Performance Indicators	Base Measure	Improvement Measure
<b>1</b> <i>to increase the percentage of student population voting in student elections each year</i>	12% (2017) 18% (2016)	19% (2018) +7%
<b>2</b> <i>to increase the number of students who are aware that they are members of the Union by 10%</i>	16% (2014) 43% (2017)	53% (2019) +10%

Key Actions
Enhance the student representative system
Give distance-learning and direct-entry students a voice, including introducing a STAR Award for ODL courses



<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">YOUR OPPORTUNITIES</h2> </div>	<p><i>“to provide a comprehensive program of extra-curricular opportunities to members, that makes a significant contribution to student development”</i></p>
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Objectives
<p><i>To provide a broad range of well-run sports clubs and non-competitive physical activity, with opportunities to participate, officiate, coach, support, and compete locally, nationally and internationally</i></p>
<p><i>To facilitate the creation and support the operation of well-run societies, assessed by the Quality Mark points system</i></p>
<p><i>To develop and enhance a range of student-led groups, locally, nationally and internationally, providing a range of transferable skills</i></p>
<p><i>To develop and support a range of opportunities that introduces students to new experiences and enhances their student journey</i></p>

Key Performance Indicators	Base Measure	Improvement Measure
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><i>to increase the percentage of students engaged in extracurricular activities by 5%</i></p>	<p><i>Society members:</i> 16% (2017) 12% (2016)</p>	<p>21% (2018) <b>+5%</b> <i>(Societies)</i></p>
	<p><i>Sports club members:</i> 10% (2017) 9% (2016)</p>	<p>15% (2018) <b>+5%</b> <i>(Sports Clubs)</i></p>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><i>to increase the number of volunteering hours achieved by students by 10%</i></p>	<p>22,050 hours (2017) 17,000 hours (2016) 15,238 hours (2015)</p>	<p>24,255 hours (2018) <b>+10%</b></p>

Key Actions
<p>Introduce a new <b>Quality Mark points system</b> for all societies so we can better measure their activities</p>
<p>Prioritise filling <b>internal volunteering opportunities</b>, ensuring students are aware of how to log their achievements on their <b>HEAR transcript</b></p>



<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"><b>YOUR WELLBEING</b></div>	<i>“to support your mental and physical wellbeing and to provide an inclusive and safe environment for all”</i>
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Objectives
<i>To foster an environment of inclusivity, diversity and safe spaces to safeguard the mental and physical wellbeing of students</i>
<i>To identify specific issues faced by students through undertaking a mental health audit</i>
<i>To create and promote sustainable initiatives and campaigns which encourage mental and physical wellbeing</i>
<i>To empower students to support each other throughout their time at university</i>

Key Performance Indicators	Base Measure	Improvement Measure
<b>5</b> <i>to increase the percentage of students that <b>strongly agree</b> the Union supports students and creates an inclusive and safe community by 15%</i>	35% (2017)	50% (2019) <b>+15%</b>
<b>6</b> <i>to increase awareness of Advice and Support services and Nightline</i>	79% (2017) (Advice) 87% (2017) (Nightline)	90% (2019) (Advice) <b>+11%</b> 90% (2019) (Nightline) <b>+3%</b>

Key Actions
Participate in an <b>audit of mental health</b> issues amongst the student body, and of support services available, conducted by Alterline
Establish a drop-in <b>peer-support group</b> to help students who are not receiving specialist counselling





<div style="border: 2px solid #e91e63; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">YOUR COMMUNITY</h2> </div>	<p><i>“to contribute to our members being part of an inclusive, safe community, both on campus, off campus and online”</i></p>
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Objectives
<p><i>To share services and experiences with the community to build the reputation of students and alumni within the local community</i></p>
<p><i>To create a social space that meets the needs and aspirations of the student body</i></p>
<p><i>To utilise all on-campus spaces and engage off-campus spaces to offer a range of social, fun and rewarding events, enhancing the student experience</i></p>
<p><i>To create a cohesive plan across all departments, utilising our digital resources to add to our active online community engaging both on and off campus students</i></p>

Key Performance Indicators	Base Measure	Improvement Measure
<p><b>7</b></p> <p><i>to increase student satisfaction with social space and community atmosphere</i></p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>6.0/7.0 (2018)</p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><i>to increase the percentage of students that <b>strongly agree</b> that the Union helps build a fun, diverse and inclusive community where students can meet and engage with each other</i></p>	<p>35% (2017)</p>	<p>50% (2019) +15%</p>

Key Actions
<p>Develop <b>Kaim Cottage</b> to include a swap shop, promoting reuse of goods</p>
<p>Hold more events on campus, including an expanded <b>One RGU, Many Nations</b> and <b>RGU’s Got Talent</b></p>



<b>YOUR FUTURE</b>	<i>“to facilitate the development of RGU students by supporting and empowering our members to maximise their potential through an innovative, well governed and sustainable union”</i>
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Objectives
<i>To promote skills development and entrepreneurship, and the opportunity to gain accolades to produce employable graduates</i>
<i>To inspire our members to have a sustainable approach to the environment and become ethical global citizens</i>
<i>To continue enhancing existing services, and to identify new streams of resources, allowing the Union to evolve and develop</i>
<i>To work in partnership with the University to continually set new standards of excellence in the student experience at a global level</i>

Key Performance Indicators	Base Measure	Improvement Measure
<b>9</b> <i>to engage a growing range of students in leadership opportunities and skills development</i>	No figures	10 students (2017)
<b>10</b> <i>to maintain commercial income at a similar level</i>	£73,142 (2017) £74,041 (2016)	£75,000 (2018)

Key Actions
Develop a <b>student leadership programme</b> to provide skills development and recognition for engaged students
Explore all avenues of funding to continue <b>Go Green initiative</b>



<b>Strategic Plan</b>	<b>Partnerships</b>
<p>Along with our core strategic objectives, RGU:Union also participates in a number of partnership strategies involving other stakeholders or projects which contribute to our overall strategy.</p>	

Student Partnership Agreement	Mental Health Agreement	Student Community Partnership
<b>Supporting: Your Voice</b>	<b>Supporting: Your Wellbeing</b>	<b>Supporting: Your Community</b>
<p>The Student Partnership Agreement is a joint plan between RGU:Union and RGU to outline how the organizations will work together to run student representation across the University.</p> <p>The agreement aims to put students at the heart of decision making at the university and to empower students to be co-creators of solutions.</p>	<p>The Mental Health Agreement is a combined strategy with RGU to raise awareness, run activities and support those with mental health at RGU.</p> <p>It is a joint approach to outline actions that allow open dialogue, early intervention and improved understanding across Union and University activities.</p>	<p>The Student Community Partnership Strategy is a shared plan between students' associations in Aberdeen and community groups to improve the relationship and impact of the student community in civic life.</p> <p>The strategy develops key actions for individual institutions along with collective projects to improve community in Aberdeen.</p>
<p><b>Core Aim:</b> <i>“Through working together between students and staff we shall be able to create a vibrant learning experience”</i></p>	<p><b>Core Aim:</b> <i>“To work collaboratively to raise awareness and take action on mental health issues as a key priority at RGU” [TBC]</i></p>	<p><b>Core Aim:</b> <i>“To bring together students and wider members of the Aberdeen Community with integration and collaboration as key”</i></p>



**Objectives:** The development objectives and enhancement objectives are decided each year. Regular objectives for RGU:Union include:

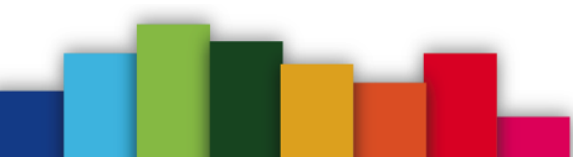
- *Recruit and train student representatives;*
- *Participate in University committees;*
- *Promote 'Partnership at RGU';*
- *Run 'Achieved in Partnership Campaign';*
- *Administrate student award schemes.*

**Objectives:** The key actions for the Mental Health Agreement are still in development, however previous objectives have included:

- *Raise awareness of mental wellbeing;*
- *Improve understanding of mental health;*
- *Encourage early intervention;*
- *Promote open dialogue;*
- *Reduce stigma;*
- *Clearly signpost support mechanisms.*

**Objectives:** The specific actions of the strategy decided annually, but the key objectives focus around:

- *Improving quality of transport;*
- *Working collectively on housing;*
- *Improving waste management;*
- *Promoting active citizenship;*
- *Encouraging equality and diversity;*
- *Ensuring security and safety.*



rgu:union



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